

1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, Merri Dee, Director of Community Relations,
3 celebrates over 25 years at Chicago's WGN-TV, Channel Nine;
4 and

5 WHEREAS, Merri Dee serves as liaison between WGN-TV and
6 community organizations, ensuring the station serves the
7 needs of the diverse coverage areas and represents Tribune
8 Company nationally; as the manager of WGN-TV Children's
9 Charities, a fund of the McCormick Tribune Foundation, over
10 21 million dollars have been raised and donated to not for
11 profit organizations, focusing on children's issues; and

12 WHEREAS, Merri Dee began her career in 1966 as a radio
13 personality, and quickly moved to WGN-TV as a newscaster and
14 talk radio host; and

15 WHEREAS, Merri Dee is known for her extensive charitable
16 work and her commitment to social service; she is a
17 nationally recognized motivational speaker and is in constant
18 demand as a toastmistress, panelist moderator, and
19 fund-raising strategist while also hosting a variety of
20 television specials; and

21 WHEREAS, Merri Dee has made the welfare of children
22 waiting to be adopted in Illinois her pet project; Governor
23 Ryan commended her and WGN-TV for increasing the number of
24 adoptions in the State of Illinois over 50 percent; most
25 recently, she was selected by the U.S. Secretary of Health
26 and Human Services for the 2001 Adoption Excellence Award for
27 her exceptional work and accomplishments in creating
28 permanency for children who wait in foster care; and

29 WHEREAS, A strong believer in education, Merri Dee has
30 hosted the United Negro College Fund's national "Evening of
31 Stars", serving two years as the "volunteer" assisting in

1 raising over 20 million dollars for student scholarships; and

2 WHEREAS, Merri Dee is one of the founders of "Athletes
3 for a Better Education", where she worked with high school
4 athletes, their parents, coaches educators, and other sports
5 representatives; six of these athletes are professional
6 basketball players, coaches, or managers; and

7 WHEREAS, Merri Dee is considered both unique and
8 courageous because of her strength to survive gunshot wounds
9 to the head when she and a television guest were kidnapped
10 from the television station; lobbying State and city
11 politicians, she assisted in the passage of Illinois' first
12 Victims Bill of Rights legislation that has served as the
13 model for the United States of America; today she travels
14 nationwide sharing her wisdom and vision on how "A Victim
15 Becomes a Survivor"; and

16 WHEREAS, Merri Dee is the recipient of numerous awards,
17 including: AT&T's "Outstanding Media Person", the Chicago
18 Boards of Education's "Volunteer of the Year Award", the
19 National Community to Prevent Child Abuse's "The National
20 Voice Award", and the North American Council on Adopted
21 Children's "Adoption Activist"; in addition, she received the
22 "Adoption Spokesperson Award" from the Adoption Information
23 Center of Illinois, the Child Care Association of Illinois,
24 One Church One Child, and the Department of Children and
25 Family Services; she also received the "Outstanding
26 Leadership Award" from the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago, the
27 "Woman of the Year" award from Today's Chicago Woman News,
28 the "Mentor's Award" from Mercedes Benz and Chicago Magazine,
29 the "Community Service Award" from the National Baptist
30 Institute, the "Lifetime Silver Circle" award from the
31 Chicago Academy of TV Arts and Sciences, the "Lifetime
32 Achievement Award" from the University of Illinois Center on
33 Women and Gender, the "Gracie Allen Award" for her TV

1 Adoption Campaign from the National Association of American
2 Women in Radio and TV, and she was presented with an Honorary
3 Doctorate Degree from Lewis University; and

4 WHEREAS, Merri Dee serves on the boards of several
5 organizations including: Ronald McDonald House Charities,
6 Associated Colleges of Illinois, Adoptions Unlimited, Junior
7 Achievement, the Gateway Charitable Foundation, National Tree
8 Trust Foundation, and the Chinese American Service League;
9 she continues to serve on the Illinois Attorney General's
10 Violent Crime Victims Commission and the States Attorney's
11 Advisory Counsel on Violence; and

12 WHEREAS, On May 22, 2002, the Joint Civic Committee of
13 Italian Americans will honor Merri Dee and present her with
14 the 31st Annual Dante Award in recognition of her outstanding
15 contribution, dedication, and inspiration in the
16 communications field; therefore, be it

17 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
18 NINETY-SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
19 we congratulate Merri Dee of WGN-TV on receiving the 31st
20 Annual Dante Award in recognition of her dedication, service,
21 and inspiration in the communication field; and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
23 presented to Merri Dee as an expression of our esteem.